Séminaire mar 8 Fév 2011 11h / Seminar Tues Feb 8th 2011 11h

Conférencier/Lecturer:	Thomas F. Pedersen Executive Director Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions University of Victoria
Sujet/Subject:	CMOS LECTURE 2011 Climate Change and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions: Blending Science, Social Science, Politics and Opportunity
Présentation/Presentation:	Anglais / English
Lieu/Room:	Salle des vents (Dorval)

iweb: http://web-mrb.cmc.ec.gc.ca/mrb/rpn/SEM/
web: http://collaboration.cmc.ec.gc.ca/science/rpn/SEM/index.php

Abstract

Global warming caused by human activities is happening, it is scientifically well understood and, as will be discussed in the lecture, it presents a serious challenge to human societies. But in that challenge lies an opportunity for us to do things better, to unleash a new era of creativity, to improve the stewardship of our natural environment, and to revitalize our economy while generating new, cleaner industrial activity.

Taking such action demands concerted political leadership and policy development informed by high-quality interdisciplinary research. The latter requirement led the Government of British Columbia to create in 2008 of the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), an endowed four-university consortium hosted and led by the University of Victoria that focuses on blending the social and physical sciences and engineering to provide best-practice policy pathways that the provincial government can follow.

The role PICS is now playing in contributing to British Columbia's response to the climate-change challenge will be described and set within the larger North American context. But there remains a problem: most "climate solutions" are not of provincial scale, and many span, if not the full globe, at least the scale of the nation or continents. "Solutions" case studies that span both the science-policy intersection and large spatial scales will be presented. For example, the directive to enhance corn-ethanol production in the U.S. has reinforced unwelcome, distal oceanographic impacts that might have been curbed had science and interdisciplinary discussion been used more effectively in the policy design. And in Canada, our provincially-controlled electrical grid system hampers our ability to accommodate renewable energy, thereby limiting the scope we have to reduce CO_2 emissions. Europe is taking a collective, aggressive and different tack that will be contrasted to the current situation in Canada.

Finally, it is increasingly clear that Canada could take steps that would simultaneously allow us to reduce carbon emissions –an imperative that climate science tells us is a must– while yielding significant new economic value. Getting there will require recognition by the Canadian public (and its mirror - our politicians) of both need *and* opportunity. Therein lies another challenge–one which PICS is also addressing– that is rooted in the communication of science, economic perceptions and economic reality, and human behavioural psychology.